AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method ~~for enabling a first network to detect a loop in a second network, the second network being communicably coupled to the first network, the first network running a first loop-avoidance protocol instance, the second network not running the first loop avoidance protocol instance, the method~~ comprising:

    sending a first loop packet from a first port in a <u>switching device</u> ~~bridge~~ of <u>a</u> ~~the~~ first

    network running a loop avoidance protocol instance, the first loop packet including a

    first identifier with a first reference to the first port;

    receiving a second loop packet at the <u>switching device</u> ~~bridge~~, the second loop packet

    including a second identifier with a second reference to a second port;

    comparing the second reference with the first reference; and

    detecting the loop in <u>a</u> ~~the~~ second network when the first and second references match<u>, the</u>

    <u>second network communicably coupled to the first network, the second network not</u>

    <u>running the first avoidance protocol instance.</u>

2. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising blocking at least

    one of the ports in the first <u>switching device</u> ~~bridge~~ when the first and second references

    match.

3. (Original) The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the blocking includes blocking the port

    which sent the first loop packet.

4. (Original) The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the blocking includes blocking the port which received the second loop packet.

5. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 2, further comprising, when the second reference does not match the first reference, for a defined period of time, opening the at least one of the ports in the ~~switching device~~ bridge which was blocked.

6. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, comprising when the second identifier does not correspond to any of the ports in the switching device ~~bridge~~, forwarding the second loop packet to another switching device ~~bridge~~.

7. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the first identifier further includes a third reference to the switching device ~~bridge~~, the second identifier further includes a fourth reference to another switching device ~~bridge~~, and the method further comprises:

    comparing the third and fourth references; and

    when the third reference matches the fourth reference and the first reference does not match the second reference, dropping the second loop packet.

8. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the first network is running a first instance of a spanning tree protocol and the second network is not running the first instance of the spanning tree protocol.

9. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the first identifier includes a third reference to a VLAN where the first port resides.

10. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

a first network configured to run a first loop avoidance protocol instance, the first network communicably coupled to a second network, the second network not configured to run the first loop avoidance protocol instance;

a switching device ~~bridge~~ in the first network;

a first port in the switching device ~~bridge~~; wherein

the first port is configured to send ~~sends~~ a first loop packet including a first identifier with a first reference to the first port;

the switching device ~~bridge~~ is configured to receive ~~receives~~ a second loop packet, the second loop packet including a second identifier with a second reference to a second port; and

the switching device ~~bridge~~ is further configured to determine ~~determines~~ the second reference, compare ~~compares~~ the second reference with the first reference, and detect ~~detects~~ the loop in a ~~the~~ second network when the first and second references match.

11. (Currently Amended) The system as recited in claim 10, wherein the switching device ~~bridge~~ further blocks at least one of the ports in the switching device ~~bridge~~ when the first and second references match.

12. (Original) The system as recited in claim 11, wherein the blocking includes blocking the port which sent the first loop packet.

13. (Original) The system as recited in claim 11, wherein the blocking includes blocking the port which received the second loop packet.

14. (Currently Amended) The system as recited in claim 11, wherein when the second reference does not match the first reference for a defined period of time, the first switching device ~~bridge~~ opens the at least one of the ports which was blocked.

15. (Currently Amended) The system as recited in claim 10, wherein when the second identifier does not correspond to any of the ports in the switching device ~~bridge~~, the switching device ~~bridge~~ forwards the second loop packet to another switching device ~~bridge~~.

16. (Currently Amended) The system as recited in claim 10, wherein the first identifier further includes a third reference to the switching device ~~bridge~~, the second identifier further includes a fourth reference to another switching device ~~bridge~~, and the switching device ~~bridge~~ further:

compares the third and fourth references; and

when the third reference matches the fourth reference and the first reference does not match the second reference, the switching device ~~bridge~~ drops the second loop packet.

17. (Original) The system as recited in claim 10, wherein the first network is running a first instance of a spanning tree protocol and the second network is not running the first instance of the spanning tree protocol.

18. (Original) The system as recited in claim 10, wherein the first identifier includes a third reference to a VLAN where the first port resides.

19. (Currently Amended) A ~~switching device~~ bridge in a first network communicably coupled to a second network, the first network running a first loop avoidance protocol instance, the second network not running the first loop avoidance protocol instance, the bridge comprising:

a first port configured to:

send; wherein the first port sends a first loop packet including a first identifier with a first reference to the first port;

the switching device configured to:

receive ~~the bridge receives~~ a second loop packet, the second loop packet including a second identifier with a second reference to a second port; ~~and~~

determine ~~the bridge determines~~ the second reference,; ~~compares~~

compare the second reference with the first reference;, and ~~detects~~

detect a loop in a second network when the first and second references match, the second network communicably coupled to a first network comprising the switching device, the first network running a first loop avoidance protocol instance, the second network not running the first loop avoidance protocol.

20. (Currently Amended) The switching device ~~bridge~~ as recited in claim 19, wherein the switching device ~~bridge~~ father blocks at least one of the ports in the switching device ~~bridge~~ when the first and second references match.

21. (Currently Amended) The switching device ~~bridge~~ as recited in claim 20, wherein the blocking includes blocking the port which sent the first loop packet.

22. (Currently Amended) The switching device ~~bridge~~ as recited in claim 20, wherein the blocking includes blocking the port which received the second loop packet.

23. (Currently Amended) The switching device ~~bridge~~ as recited in claim 20, further comprising, when the second reference does not match the first reference for a defined period of time, opening the at least one of the ports in the switching device ~~bridge~~ which was blocked.

24. (Currently Amended) The switching device ~~bridge~~ as recited in claim 19, wherein when the second identifier does not correspond to any of the ports in the switching device ~~bridge~~, the switching device ~~bridge~~ forwards the second loop packet to another switching device ~~bridge~~.

25. (Currently Amended) The switching device ~~bridge~~ as recited in claim 19, wherein the first identifier further includes a third reference to the switching device ~~bridge~~, the second identifier further includes a fourth reference to another switching device ~~bridge~~, and the switching device ~~bridge~~ further:

compares the third and fourth references; and

when the third reference matches the fourth reference and the first reference does not match the second reference, the switching device ~~bridge~~ drops the second loop packet.

26. (Currently Amended) The switching device ~~bridge~~ as recited in claim 19, wherein the first

identifier includes a third reference to a VLAN where the first port resides.

27. (Currently Amended) A computer readable storage medium including computer executable

code for performing a method, the method comprising ~~enabling a first network to detect a~~

~~loop in a second network, the second network being communicably coupled to the first~~

~~network, the first network running a first loop avoidance protocol instance, the second~~

~~network not running the first loop avoidance protocol instance, the code performing the steps~~

~~of~~:

sending a first loop packet from a first port in a switching device ~~bridge~~ of a ~~the~~ first

network, the first loop packet including a first identifier with a first reference to the first

port;

receiving a second loop packet at the switching device ~~bridge~~, the second loop packet

including a second identifier with a second reference to a second port;

determining the second reference;

comparing the second reference with the first reference; and

detecting the loop in a ~~the~~ second network when the first and second references match, the

second network communicably coupled to the first network, the second network not

running the first avoidance protocol instance.

28. (Original) The storage medium as recited in claim 27, wherein the code further enables the

step of blocking at least one of the ports in the first network when the first and second

references match.

29. (Original) The storage medium as recited in claim 28, wherein the blocking includes blocking the port which sent the first loop packet.

30. (Original) The storage medium as recited in claim 28, wherein the blocking includes blocking the port which received the second loop packet.

31. (Currently Amended) The storage medium as recited in claim 28, wherein the code further enables the step of opening at least one of the ports in the ~~switching device~~ <u>switching device</u> ~~bridge~~ which was blocked when the second reference does not match the first reference for a defined period of time.

32. (Currently Amended) The storage medium as recited in claim 27, wherein when the second identifier does not correspond to *any* of the ports in the <u>switching device</u> ~~bridge~~, the code further enables the step of forwarding the second loop packet to another <u>switching device</u> ~~bridge~~.

33. (Currently Amended) The storage medium as recited in claim 27, wherein the first identifier further includes a third reference to the <u>switching device</u> ~~bridge~~, the second identifier further includes a fourth reference to another <u>switching device</u> ~~bridge~~, and the code further enables the steps of

comparing the third and fourth references; and

when the third reference matches the fourth reference and the first reference does not match the second reference, dropping the second loop packet.

34. (Original) The storage medium as recited in claim 27, wherein the first identifier includes a third reference to a VLAN where the first port resides.

35. (Currently Amended) A system ~~for enabling a first network to detect a loop in a second network, the second network being communicably coupled to the first network, the first network running a first loop avoidance protocol instance, the second network not running the first loop avoidance protocol instance, the system~~ comprising;

a first network <u>configured to run a first loop avoidance protocol instance, the first network communicably coupled to a second network, the second network not configured to run the first loop avoidance protocol instance</u>;

a plurality of <u>switching devices</u> ~~bridges~~ in the first network;

a plurality of ports, at least one port for each of the <u>switching devices</u> ~~bridges~~; wherein

each port connected to the second network <u>is configured to send</u> ~~sends~~ a respective first loop packet including a first identifier with a first reference to the respective port;

each <u>switching device</u> ~~bridge~~ <u>is configured to receive</u> ~~receives~~ a respective second loop packet, each second loop packet including a respective second identifier with a respective second reference to a respective second port; and

each respective <u>switching device</u> ~~bridge~~ <u>is</u> further <u>configured to determine</u> ~~determines~~ the respective second reference, <u>compare</u> ~~compares~~ the respective second reference with the respective first reference, and <u>detect</u> ~~detects~~ a loop in the second network when the respective first and respective second references match.

36. (Currently Amended) A method ~~for enabling a first network to detect a loop in a second network communicably coupled to the first network, the first network running a first loop~~

~~avoidance protocol instance, the second network not running the first-loop avoidance~~

~~protocol instance, the method~~ comprising:

running a second protocol in <u>a</u> ~~the~~ first network <u>running a first loop avoidance protocol</u>

<u>instance</u> to detect a loop in the second network<u>, the first network communicably coupled</u>

<u>to a second network, the second network not running the first loop avoidance protocol</u>

<u>instance</u>; and

protecting the first network when a loop is detected in the second network.

37. (Currently Amended) A system ~~for enabling a first network to detect a loop in a second~~

~~network communicably coupled to the first network, the system~~ comprising:

a first network running a first loop avoidance protocol instance;

a second network not running the first loop avoidance protocol instance<u>, the first network</u>

<u>communicably coupled to the second network</u>; and wherein:

the first network <u>is configured to:</u>

<u>run</u> ~~runs~~ a second loop avoidance protocol instance to detect for a loop in the second

network; and ~~the first network further protects~~

<u>protect</u> the first network when a loop is detected in the second network.

38. (Original) The system as recited in claim 37, wherein the protecting includes blocking one

of the ports in the first network.

39. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

a first network <u>configured to run</u> ~~running~~ a first loop avoidance protocol instance; and

a second network communicably coupled to the first network, the second network not

configured to run ~~running~~ the first loop avoidance protocol instance and having a loop;

wherein the first network is protected from the loop in the second network.

40. (Original) The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the blocking includes blocking one of

the port which sent the first loop packet and the port which received the second loop packet

based on the respective port IDs.

41. (Currently Amended) The system as recited in claim 11, wherein the switching device

~~bridge~~ blocks one of the port which sent the first loop packet and the port which received the

second loop packet based on the respective port IDs.

42. (Currently Amended) The switching device ~~bridge~~ as recited in claim 20, wherein the

switching device ~~bridge~~ blocks one of the port which sent the first loop packet and the port

which received the second loop packet based on the respective port IDs.

43. (Original) The storage medium as recited in claim 28, wherein the blocking includes

blocking one of the port which sent the first loop packet and the port which received the

second loop packet based on the respective port IDs.

44. (New) An apparatus comprising:

means for sending a first loop packet from a first port in a switching device of the first

network running a loop avoidance protocol instance, the first loop packet including a

first identifier with a first reference to the first port;

means for receiving a second loop packet at the switching device, the second loop packet

including a second identifier with a second reference to a second port;

means for comparing the second reference with the first reference; and

means for detecting the loop in a second network when the first and second references

match, the second network communicably coupled to the first network, the second

network not running the first avoidance protocol instance.

45. A program storage device readable by a machine, embodying a program of instructions

executable by the machine to perform a method, the method comprising:

sending a first loop packet from a first port in a switching device of the first network running

a loop avoidance protocol instance, the first loop packet including a first identifier with

a first reference to the first port;

receiving a second loop packet at the switching device, the second loop packet including a

second identifier with a second reference to a second port;

comparing the second reference with the first reference; and

detecting the loop in a second network when the first and second references match, the

second network communicably coupled to the first network, the second network not

running the first avoidance protocol instance.